CIRTPA Small Community Fund Application

FFY 2028

CENTRAL IOWA REGIONAL
CIRTPA
TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ALLIANCE

Schedule and Decision-Making Process

November 2026	Application posted to the CIRTPA website.
February 12, 2027	**Small Community Fund applications due by 4:30pm.**
Early March 2027	CIRTPA Funding Subcommittee hears short project presentations given by sponsor communities. Subcommittee scores projects and makes a recommendation to CIRTPA TTC and TPC.
March 2027	Funding Subcommittee Recommendations to CIRTPA TTC and TPC for discussion and possible action.
May 2027	Funding Subcommittee Recommendations to CIRTPA TTC and TPC for action (if not approved in March).
May 2027	Draft *Federal Fiscal Years 2028-2031 Transportation Improvement Program* (FFY 2028-2031 TIP) to CIRTPA TTC and TPC for review, comment, and action. Public comment period and public meeting held.
June 2027	Draft FFY 2028-2031 TIP transmitted to Iowa DOT and Federal Highway Administration.
July 2027	Draft FFY 2028-2031 TIP to CIRTPA TTC and TPC for action. Final FFY
July 2027	2028-2031 TIP transmitted to Iowa DOT.

** All dates are tentative and subject to change. Should funding requests be lower than the funding amount, the Funding Subcommittee may not meet.*

Grant Information and Guidelines

Each year, the Central Iowa Regional Transportation Planning Alliance (CIRTPA) receives over $6 million in Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Funding. This funding originates from the Federal Highway Administration and is passed through the Iowa DOT to Iowa's Regional Planning Affiliations (RPAs), CIRTPA included. From there, CIRTPA allocates funding to its communities. Counties and cities over 5,000 population receive an automatic allocation, 2.2% goes toward regional transit costs, 4.4% goes to small communities, and the remaining amount, just over $43,000, goes toward regional transportation planning efforts. With that, CIRTPA has approximately $270,000 annually to award to roadway and bridge projects in small communities.

Eligibility

- Applicants must be located in the CIRTPA region (see Appendix A). This does NOT include communities within the MPO regions. Communities within the Ames Area MPO region include Ames and Gilbert. Communities within the Des Moines Area MPO region include Altoona, Ankeny, Bondurant, Carlisle, Clive, Cumming, Des Moines, Elkhart, Grimes, Johnston, Mitchellville, Norwalk, Pleasant Hill, Polk City, Urbandale, Van Meter, Waukee, West Des Moines, and Windsor Heights.
- Applicants must have a population of less than 5,000 residents (i.e. small communities).
- Projects are NOT required to be sponsored by one or more of the nineteen CIRTPA member governments or the Heart of Iowa Regional Transit Agency.
- Projects must be consistent with the goals of CIRTPA's Long Range Transportation Plan. The project does not need to be listed in the plan.
- Road projects must be on the federal-aid system. This includes all roadways classified as collector or higher for urban areas or major collectors or higher for rural areas, under the Federal Functional Classification (FFC) System. This also includes farm-to-market routes. FFC maps can be found here: City, County.
- Bridges must be on the Poor Condition list (see Appendix B).
- Applicants may submit ONE application for each application period. Multiple applications will not be accepted.

Eligible Projects

- Roadway and related projects
- Bridge projects

Grant Application

- The application may be submitted via email to CIRTPA staff. The link to the Small Community Fund grant application can be found on the CIRTPA website.
- Each grant application must answer all of the questions including providing a detailed summary of expenditures.
- Email a scanned copy of the resolution from the applicant's council, board of supervisors, or similar governing body, guaranteeing the local funds for the STBG match and authorizing the project. An example resolution can be found in Appendix D.
- Applications are due on or before 4:30 p.m., February 12, 2027.
- Questions, applications, and/or GIS shapefiles should be sent to: Alyssa Schaeffer, aschaeffer@midiowaplanning.org.

Grant Review Criteria

- CIRTPA, when considering project requests for Small Community funds, shall place primary emphasis upon maintenance of region-wide transportation systems as identified in the Long Range Transportation Plan.
- Criteria used for evaluating the project's ability to meet targeted performance measures can be found in Appendix C.

Project Status Updates

If awarded the funds, the community is required to update CIRTPA on the status of the project. The status updates should follow Iowa DOT's development progress in TPMS which includes the following steps:

1. Concept Statement
2. Preliminary Plans
3. Check Plans
4. Final Plans
5. Clearances
6. Development Certification
7. Plan Turn In

Project sponsors will include CIRTPA staff in their correspondence with Iowa DOT at each stage in the development process. This will increase coordination and allow staff to better serve its member governments.

Funding Considerations

- Jurisdictions must bear the initial expenditures of the project, and receive reimbursement for eligible expenditures, as defined by Iowa DOT. The agreement with Iowa DOT provides for reimbursement of up to 80 percent of the project cost, or a set amount, whichever is less. Design and engineering costs are generally incurred in the early stages of a project.
- CIRTPA's **Small Community funds only cover construction costs**. Engineering fees, legal fees, land acquisition costs, and other non-construction costs will NOT be covered. Non-construction costs will NOT count towards the applicant's 20% matching funds.
- CIRTPA will strive to fund projects at appropriate levels, however CIRTPA reserves the right to fund projects as needed and will award at CIRTPA's discretion as much or as little funding as deemed worthy.
- STBG funds shall be allocated to an individual project for a specific fiscal year in the TIP. For projects extending over multiple years for implementation, funds may be allocated to each of the necessary fiscal years within the TIP to complete the requested project.
- Prior to reviewing new projects to be considered for STBG funding, CIRTPA shall determine the status of all prior commitments. All projects previously approved and for which some part of STBG funds have been obligated shall receive priority consideration for future or additional funding, except if reasonable progress to completion is not maintained as determined by CIRTPA. However, CIRTPA may reduce or eliminate multi-year funding commitments in response to revenue shortfalls, reductions in its STBG allocation, or new priorities.
- CIRTPA staff shall submit to the Funding Subcommittee a ranking of individual project based on the project's ability to meet targeted performance measures. Staff recommendations for individual projects shall be used by CIRTPA in its decision-making process for assigning STBG funds to requesting transportation improvement projects. Staff's recommendations shall be

based on the project's ability to support achievement of CIRTPA's performance measure targets in the Long Range Transportation Plan.

- Once CIRTPA has selected projects for funding, CIRTPA shall forward a letter to recipient(s) outlining the stipulations associated with acceptance of CIRTPA's funds, including the need for the recipient to provide periodic updates on the project to CIRTPA.
- Funding can support multi-year projects.
- CIRTPA receives federal funding and may not discriminate against anyone on the basis of race, color, or national origin, according to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. By applying to receive these funds the applicant is acknowledging that they understand and adhere to the principles of Title VI when performing activities related to the funding they receive from the Central Iowa Regional Transportation Planning Alliance.

Bridge Program

CIRTPA staff will provide a ranking of submitted bridge projects to the Funding Subcommittee. The Funding Subcommittee will use the bridge rating and their discretion to recommend a funding award for the bridge projects.

Project Amendment Process

When a jurisdiction changes the scope of a project, after funds are awarded by CIRTPA, the project must be reviewed again by the TTC and the Funding Subcommittee to determine whether the change in project scope would have materially changed the project's original performance to meet set performance measures and targets. Based on that determination, the Subcommittee will make a recommendation to the Policy Committee, up to and including the withdrawal of CIRTPA approval for STBG funding for the project. This is the same process that

may occur when a project does not make appropriate, scheduled progress leading to recapture and reallocation of future funds previously designated for the project. The CIRTPA Policy Committee will, after due consideration, make a final decision. Immaterial changes that would not affect the original performance of a project previously ranked and approved for CIRTPA funding may be permitted in the sound discretion of CIRTPA staff.

TIP Amendment Process

Amendments

An amendment is a revision to the TIP. An amendment can include an addition or deletion of a project or a major change in design concept or scope. Any proposed changes that meet any of the following criteria are considered amendments.

- **Project cost**: Projects in which the recalculated project costs increase federal aid by more than 30 percent or increase total federal aid by more than $2 million from the original amount.
- **Schedule changes**: Projects added or deleted from the TIP.
- **Funding sources**: Adding an additional federal funding source.
- **Scope changes**: Changing the project termini, project alignment, the amount of through traffic lanes, type of work from an overlay to reconstruction, or a change to include widening of the roadway.

If the change to the TIP is an amendment, two primary procedural requirements exist: approval by CIRTPA's technical and policy boards and that the project follow CIRTPA's public participation process. When the TIP is amended, CIRTPA is required to re-demonstrate fiscal constraint of the TIP/STIP. An amendment is limited by CIRTPA's fiscal constraint determined by the projects programmed at the TIP's approval.

Administrative Modifications

An administrative modification is a revision making a minor change to a project in the TIP. An administrative modification does not require public review and comment or board approval. In most instances, administrative modifications are also subject to re-demonstration of fiscal constraint of the TIP/STIP.

An administrative modification can include minor changes to project costs and project or project phase initiation dates. Any proposed changes that meet any of the following criteria are considered administrative modifications.

Project cost: Projects in which the recalculated projects costs do not increase federal aid by more than 30 percent or do not increase total federal aid by more than $2 million from the original amount.

- **Schedule changes**: Changes in schedules to projects included in the first four years of the TIP.
- **Funding sources**: Changing funding from one source to another.
- **Scope changes**: All changes to a project's scope require an amendment.

Fiscal Constraint

Any change to the TIP, whether it is an administrative modification or an amendment, is subject to the fiscal constraints of CIRTPA.

For example, a community has the following projects in the 5-year TIP:

- Project A with $1 million in federal aid in year 1
- Project B with $500,000 in federal aid in year 3
- Project C with $1.5 million in federal aid in year 3

If the community requests to move Project C to year 1, then the community would have to:

- Move Projects A and B back at least one year OR
- Find a project with at least $1.5 million in federal aid and have that project move backwards at least one year

Note that CIRTPA's fiscal constraint is by funding type. For example, if CIRTPA has $5 million in STBG funding programmed in the construction year of the TIP, that is the total amount of STBG funding that is available to be spent in that year. In the example in the previous paragraph, funding has to be the same type (e.g. STBG, CMAQ, TAP, etc.).

The requirement to ensure fiscal constraint does not apply to construction year projects that have already been programmed at their full federal aid participation rate and whose programming entry is being adjusted based on an updated cost estimate. That would include all projects that have been programmed with an 80/20 or 90/10 split. Fiscal constraint also does not apply to non-formula funds such as RAISE funding and reapportioned earmark funds.

Termination of Funding: Considerations

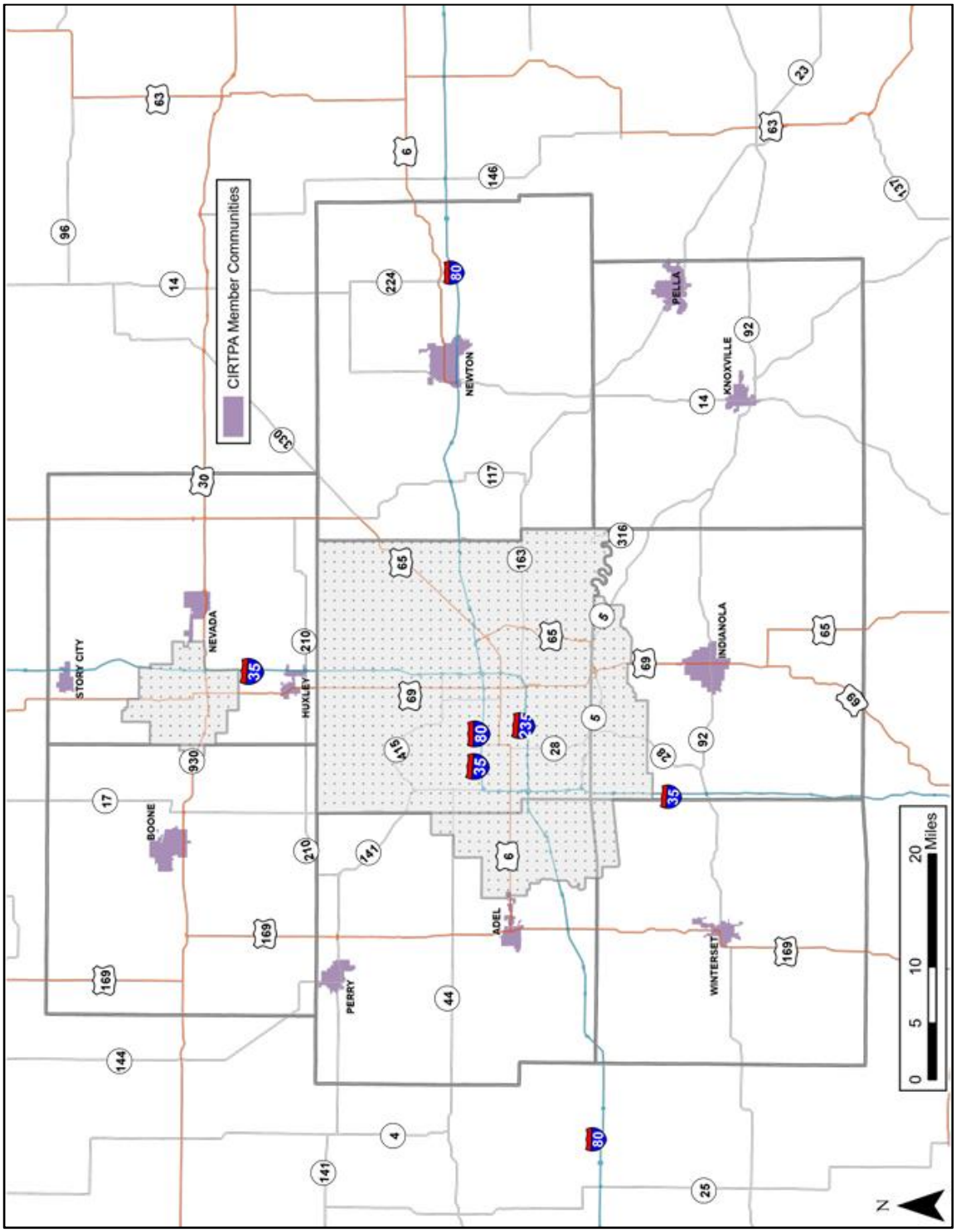
If a jurisdiction/agency's STBG funded project does not make satisfactory progress, does not follow the original scope of the project, or does not obligate the STBG funds provided within the year those funds were authorized by CIRTPA and noted for that project as previously documented, then CIRTPA may cancel the remaining STBG funding for that project and return those STBG funds. Such action to cancel project funding shall be based on the following criteria:

1) CIRTPA strongly believes it necessary to maintain rapid turnover of funds and implementation of specific projects so as not to jeopardize the loss of any funding.
2) CIRTPA strongly encourages jurisdictions/agencies to have at least preliminary project plans completed prior to submitting a project for CIRTPA's consideration for funding.
3) CIRTPA strongly believes that such a stipulation shall cause jurisdictions/agencies to provide better and more accurate project cost estimates and detailed traffic and engineering data, enabling CIRTPA to evaluate a project's feasibility in a more detailed manner.

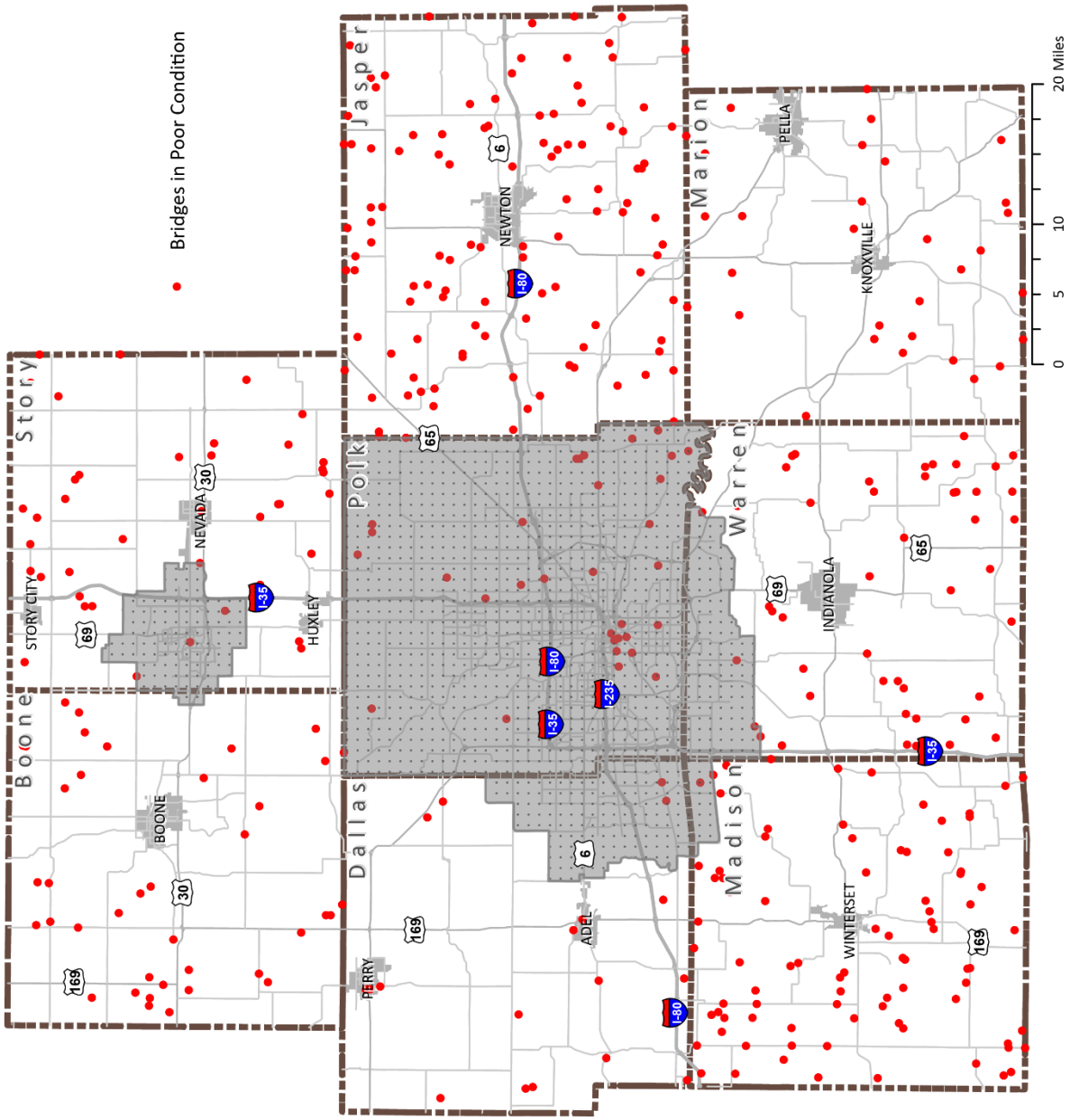
Interpretation

When and as necessary, the Funding Subcommittee will exercise responsibility for interpreting the applicable Guidelines, subject to review and approval, disapproval, or modification by the CIRTPA TTC, subject to review and approval, disapproval, or modification by the CIRTPA TPC.

Appendix A: CIRTPA Planning Area Map



Appendix B: Bridges in Poor Condition



Appendix C: Small Community Fund Scoring Matrix

EVALUATION CRITERIA	SCORE
TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS	**100**
Maintain our existing transportation system	**45**
1. Project addresses major maintenance including deficient or obsolete bridge, pavement in poor or very poor condition	+
a. Answer to question 42 is poor or very poor OR Answer to question 66 is YES AND Answers to questions 65 and 68 are YES	5
b. Project is for new construction OR Answer to question 42 is NOT poor or very poor OR Answer to question 66 is NO	0
2. Project is on a road with existing congestion (LOS E or F in peak hours)	+
a. Project is located on corridor with existing congestion (peak hours) at LOS of E or F	5
b. Project is located on corridor with existing congestion at LOS A-D	0
3. Project design includes one or more of the following congestion management strategies:	+
a. Improvements to access management For question 34, proposed is less than existing OR Answer to question 46 is YES	5
b. ITS/Signalization improvements Answer to question 49 is YES	5
c. Improvements to turning movements Answer to question 41 is YES to any of the options	5
d. Improves parallel facility/contributes to alternative routing Answer to question 55 is YES	5
e. Project does NOT include any of the congestion management strategies	0
4. Route addresses freight impediment	+
a. Answer is question 63 is YES	5
b. Answer is question 63 is NO	0

5. Community has not received funds in recent years	+
a. Answer to question 21 is NO	5
b. Answer to question 21 is YES	0
6. Project addresses an urgent need	+
a. Answer to question 27 describes a need for funding in the next 1-3 years	5
b. Answer to question 27 does not describe a need in the next 1-3 years	0
Promote livability	**15**
7. Project includes an addition to or improvement of the bicycle network	+
a. Answer to question 72 is YES	5
b. Answer to question 72 is NO	0
8. Project enhances multi-modal opportunities	+
a. Project satisfies the following items (up to five, one point each): Answer to question 29-proposed is less than or equal to 10 feet Answer to question 31-proposed is less than or equal to 35 mph Answer to question 33-proposed is less than or equal to 10 feet Answer to question 35-proposed is greater than zero Answer to question 36-proposed is equal to or greater than 8 feet Answer to question 37-proposed is greater than zero Answer to question 39-proposed is YES Answer to question 52 is YES Answer to question 53 is YES Answer to question 59 is YES	1-5
b. Project does NOT satisfy any of the items	0
9. Project improves pedestrian access and facilities	+
a. Project satisfies at least 3 of the following 6 items Answer to question 36-proposed is greater than 36-existing Answer to question 37-proposed is greater than zero Answer to question 38-proposed is YES Answer to question 39-proposed is YES Answer to question 52 is YES Answer to question 59 is YES	5
b. Project satisfies less than three of the items	0
Protect the environment and conserve resources	**20**
10. Project increases the number of street tree plantings or other landscaping.	+
a. Answer to question 76 is YES	5
b. Answer to question 76 is NO	0

11. Project avoids natural areas such as: floodplains, wetlands, and threatened or endangered federal and state wildlife habitats.	+
a. Project avoids natural areas	5
b. Project is in a floodplain, wetland, or wildlife habitat	0
12. Project is using permeable paving, vegetation or other green streets techniques to manage 1 ¼ inches of the average rainfall.	+
a. Answer to question 57 is YES	5
b. Answer to question 57 is NO	0
13. Project decreases energy consumption (idle reduction, electric vehicle infrastructure, etc.)	+
a. Answer to question 54 is greater than 0 OR Answer to question 61 is YES	5
b. Answer to question 54 is zero AND Answer to question 61 is NO	0
Provide a safe & accessible transportation system	**20**
14. Project is located in a high-crash area as defined by CMAT and the project incorporates traffic calming solutions	+
a. Project is located in a high-crash area AND Answer to question 31-proposed is less than or equal to 35 mph OR Answer to question 59 is YES	5
b. Project is NOT located in a high-crash area OR Project does not satisfy either of the items	0
15. Project is entirely or partially located within a disadvantaged area (above the regional average in 4 or more of the degrees of disadvantage – see Appendix F)	+
a. Project is located in a disadvantaged area	5
b. Project is NOT located in a disadvantaged area	0
16. Project enhances multimodal transportation to/from a disadvantaged area	+
a. Project is located in a disadvantaged area AND Project satisfies criteria 7, 8, or 9 within this rubric	5
b. Project is NOT located in a disadvantaged area OR Project does NOT satisfy criteria 7, 8, or 9	0

17. Project promotes safe routes to schools (within 1/2 mile radius of a school) with multi-modal elements	+
a. Project is located within ½ mile radius of school AND Project satisfies criteria 7, 8, or 9 within this rubric	5
b. Project is NOT located within ½ mile radius of school OR Project does NOT satisfy criteria 7, 8, or 9	0
TOTAL POINTS	***100***

Appendix D: Example Formal Resolution

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE **[GOVERNMENT]** TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION FOR FUNDING FROM THE FEDERAL SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM (STBG) TO THE CENTRAL IOWA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ALLIANCE (CIRTPA) FOR THE PARTIAL FUNDING OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF **[PROJECT NAME]** AND FURTHER APPROVING THE APPLICATION WHICH OBLIGATES THE **[CITY]** TO MATCHING FUNDS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF SAID PROJECT

Whereas, the **[Government]** is located in the Central Iowa Regional Transportation Planning Alliance Planning Area; and

Whereas, the Federal Surface Transportation Block Grant Program provides funding to local jurisdictions for the construction of eligible projects; and

Whereas, the program is administered by the Central Iowa Regional Transportation Planning Alliance which prioritizes and ranks all project applications; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE **[GOVERNING BODY]** OF THE **[GOVERNMENT]** that:

The **[Governing Body]** supports and approves the attached application for Federal Surface Transportation Program funding.

The **[Governing Body]** hereby commits to the **[Government]** matching monies as required by the Federal Surface Transportation Program funding.

The **[Government]** hereby commits to accepting and maintaining these improvements for a minimum of twenty (20) years following the completion.

The **[Designated Official]** is hereby authorized to approve and execute the application on behalf of the **[Governing Body]**.

PASSED AND APPROVED THIS **[Date]**.

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Appendix E: MIPA Grant Application & Funding Requirements

Every source of grant funding has distinct rules and requirements. Unless outlined to you in writing by MIPA, the following rules apply to every project seeking or using outside funds:

- Do not start any part of the project. Federal funding rules prohibit recipients from taking "choice-limiting actions," and beginning the project will likely be considered such an action. – Until all funding partners provide explicit authorization, do not purchase property, mobilize equipment, solicit bids, break ground, or take any other steps to begin the project. Grant programs require communities to meet specific conditions before work may start. Examples include consultation with Tribes and the Iowa State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and a general environmental review for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Failure to comply with all applicable state and federal requirements may jeopardize or disqualify the project from funding.

  Starting the project before funding is awarded may signal that the community has sufficient resources to proceed without assistance. As a result, funders may be less likely to support the project.

- For US Economic Development Administration (EDA) funding applications, in addition to the items listed in this document, the beneficiary claiming the benefit of the infrastructure project cannot start construction prior to EDA award and authorization to proceed. – If your community is applying for EDA funding, the company or companies claiming the benefit from public infrastructure cannot start the project prior to EDA funding and authorization to proceed. If businesses begin their construction or expansion project prior to EDA authorization, your community will be unable to use EDA funding.

- Soft costs (e.g. engineering, design services, grant administration, etc.) need to follow federal procurement standards to be included and fundable in the grant application. – Communicate with MIPA regarding soft costs to determine if and how procurement should take place to ensure costs are reimbursable from the grant funding source.

- Communicate with MIPA on all project activities throughout the life of the project. – Your community is responsible for providing timely project updates to MIPA. MIPA can only advocate for your community if there is a clear understanding of the entire project throughout the grant application and administration process. Updates required from applicants include:
    - Changes to the project scope, budget, timeline, and other pertinent information
    - Changes to staffing levels or personnel
    - When your community is considering hiring an engineer, purchasing equipment/property, or considering going to bid
    - Other project updates that may affect the project

- Lastly, when in doubt, reach out to MIPA staff to discuss anything that might affect the project – You may call our office at 515-304-3524 with any questions.

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Appendix F: CIRTPA Disadvantaged Areas

